



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON PHILIP RUDDOCK MP**

NEWS RELEASE

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INCREASED ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Australians will get quicker access to justice with Attorney-General Philip Ruddock announcing increased resources for the Federal Magistrates Court and the Administrative Appeals (AAT).

Another five Federal Magistrates will be appointed in response to increases in the general federal and family law jurisdiction and workload of the Federal Magistrates Court.

“The new appointments will also ensure that the Federal Magistrates Court can deal with matters expeditiously, fulfilling its role as a court for the quicker disposition of less complex matters,” Mr Ruddock said.

In order to offset the costs of the new federal magistrates, there will be an increase in general federal fees in the Federal Magistrates Court and the Federal Court and an increase in the divorce application fee in the Federal Magistrates Court. These fee increases will generate over \$3 million in revenue per year, to meet the cost of the five magistrates.

The Federal Magistrates Court continues to make a very important contribution to the administration of justice in Australia and these appointments will ensure that the Court can continue to provide an effective and accessible forum for resolving disputes.

Additional funding of \$6.8 million over four years will also be provided to support the continuing work of the AAT.

“I know the community relies on the AAT to provide access to swift and fair reviews of government decisions,” Mr Ruddock said.

In recent years, the workload of the Tribunal has increased.

The additional funding will enable the Tribunal to continue to finalise a high number of reviews in a short time frame.

The funding will also support the Tribunal in handling an increase in applications for review of taxation decisions over the next five years.

“Our increased support for the Federal Magistrates Court and the AAT recognises the valuable service both provide to the community in facilitating access to justice,” Mr Ruddock said.

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